

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 241871

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EXDIS - TOSEC 578

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO BUCHAREST: SUGGESTED TALK-
ING POINTS ON MIDDLE EAST

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

1. ROMANIA, AS THE ONLY COMMUNIST COUNTRY RETAINING DIPLO-
MATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE ARABS, HAS
AMBITIONS OF PLAYING AT SOME POINT A MIDDLE EAST MEDIATING
ROLE. SUCH A NOTION IS ANATHEMA TO THE ISRAELIS NOT ONLY
BECAUSE OF ROMANIA'S WARSAW PACT MEMBERSHIP BUT ALSO ON
ACCOUNT OF THE LAVISH OFFICIAL ATTENTION ROMANIA HAS
BESTOWED ON THE PLO OVER THE PAST YEAR. NEVERTHELESS,
ISRAEL IS SENSITIVE TO ROMANIA'S SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE, AND
WE BELIEVE ROMANIA'S UNIQUE POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
CONTEXT IS WORTHY OF SOME ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE FORM OF A
FRANK EXPOSITION BY YOU OF OUR CURRENT CONCERNS. YOU MAY
THEREFORE WISH TO CONVEY THE BASIC MESSAGE IN BUCHAREST
THAT THE ARAB STATES STAND ONLY TO LOSE IF THEY SHOULD (A)
DECIDE TO USE THEIR MILITARY OPTION, (B) FURTHER RESTRICT
THE MANEUVERING SPACE FOR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, OR (C) ALTER
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SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 241871

THE PRESENT BASIS FOR ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS BY ATTEMPT-

ING TO REPLACE RESOLUTION 242 IN THE PALESTINE DEBATE AT THE UNGA.

2. YOU COULD NOTE THAT:

A. THE UNITED STATES REMAINS COMMITTED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROMOTE A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PROGRESS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY TACKLING IN THE EARLIEST STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUES, ESPECIALLY THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE ISSUE OF FINAL BORDERS, OR JERUSALEM. THAT APPROACH BETWEEN 1967 AND 1973 PRODUCED NO PROGRESS. A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IN 1974 PRODUCED PROGRESS NOT ACHIEVED SINCE 1949.

C. WE WILL CONTINUE, IF THE PARTIES DESIRE, TO MAKE OUR GOOD OFFICES AVAILABLE TO WORK ON A SERIES OF AGREEMENTS BY WHICH STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD A FINAL SETTLEMENT CAN BE MADE. HOWEVER, IF THE PARTIES INSIST THAT COMMITMENTS ON BASIC ISSUES BE MADE BY THE OTHER SIDE IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS OR IF THEY BEGIN PUBLICLY DEFINING THEIR POSITIONS IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO MAKE THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE OTHER SIDE, WE SEE A SERIOUS DANGER THAT THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS MAY BECOME STALLED. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE FEAR THAT THE RABAT SUMMIT CONFERENCE DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL.

D. IT IS ONE THING, FOR INSTANCE, TO TAKE THE POSITION THAT IT WOULD BE AN IDEAL SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM FOR AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE JORDAN WEST BANK AND IN THE GAZA STRIP, AND THAT THE PLO SHOULD PLAY THE MAIN ROLE IN ORGANIZING A GOVERNMENT FOR SUCH A STATE; IT IS ANOTHER MATTER TO IMPLY THAT THERE CAN BE NO PROGRESS AT ALL TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT UNLESS ALL OTHER PARTIES AGREE IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT SUCH A STATE SHALL BE CREATED, OR TO INSIST THAT ISRAEL AB INITIO RECOGNIZE THE PLO AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 241871

E. ON THIS POINT IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE PALESTINIANS HAVE NOT YET TAKEN THE STEP THAT HAS MADE POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND ISRAEL. THEY HAVE NOT SIGNIFIED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AND TO MAKE PEACE WITH IT. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EQUATION IN RESOLUTION 242. ANY EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THIS PART OF THE EQUATION AS THE BASIS

FOR NEGOTIATION COULD UNDERCUT THE WHOLE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

F. WE SHARE THE GENERAL VIEW THAT A POLITICAL STALE-MATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROBABLY COULD NOT LAST FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT THE LIKELY ALTERNATIVE TO STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS ANOTHER WAR. THE INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES WOULD BE HURT. THE ARABS WOULD NOT BE CLOSER TO REGAINING THEIR TERRITORY, AND NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY SET BACK.

G. BY ITS RECORD SINCE OCTOBER 1973 THE UNITED STATES HAS PROVEN TO THE ARAB SIDE ITS DETERMINATION TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE EFFORTS BY ISRAEL TO PURSUE A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, AND UNTIL NOW, THE ARAB SIDE HAS SHOWN A READINESS TO MAKE EQUIVALENT POSITIVE EFFORTS. WE HOPE THAT THE COMING UNGA DEBATE WILL NOT UNDERMINE WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

H. THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE EXISTENCE AND SECURITY OF ISRAEL REMAINS FIRM. BUT WE RECOGNIZE THAT A JUST AND LASTING PEACE MUST ALSO REFLECT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE ARAB STATES AND OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE ISSUE IS HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS. WE HAVE SHOWN THAT OUR METHODS CAN PRODUCE RESULTS.
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